[English]

Telephone System

4091. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the telephone system is constantly deteriorating due to repeatedly breaking down of crossbar telephone exchange;

(b) whether the Government propose to convert these Exchanges into E-90-B electronic Exchanges; and

(c) if so, the time by which these Exchanges are likely to be converted into Electronic Exchanges?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. There is a programme to scrap all crossbar exchange and replace them by digital electronic exchanges, during the 9th Plan period.

MEMU Trains

4092. SHRI VIJAY PATEL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether MEMU trains started between Ahmedabad and Vadodara were previously proposed to be started between Gandhinagar and Vadodara;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to review the said decision; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Metre Gauge Rail Line in Purnea Division

4093. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN alias PAPPU YADAV : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the total length in Kilometre of metre gauge rail lines in Purnea Division;

(b) the steps being taken for gauge conversion of these important metre gauge rail lines connecting India and Nepal; and

(c) the time by which the pending work of Jogbani rail line connecting Bihar and Nepal is likely to be converted into broad gauge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Purnea is not a Railway division. Also, information regarding railway route kilometrage is maintained only Railway Zone-wise and State-wise and not civil Division or region-wise.

(b) and (c). A survey for gauge conversion of Katihar - Jagbani line has been taken up. Further consideration of the project will be possible once the survey report becomes available.

[English]

Labour Market Reforms

4094. SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI :
SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem under the captioned "Need for Labour Market Reforms" appearing in the daily 'Tribune' dated September 2, 1996;

(b) if so, whether after the adoption of the policy of liberalisation in the country during the Eighth Five Year Plan the labourer class is facing new challenges and problems;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to safeguard the interest of the labourers under threat ever since the setting up of highly technical and capital intensive industries?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d). Restructuring of industries is a natural phenomenon associated with industrial growth. The impact of the new Industrial Policy has been studied by the Government in regard to technological upgradation and modernisation of units as a consequences of liberalisation. Government established the National Renewal Fund in 1992 to provide a social safety net for the workers affected by industrial restructuring, technology upgradation and modernisation of industry. It *inter alia* envisages assistance, counselling, retraining and re-employment of workers who may become redundant.

Resignation by Doctors

4095. SHRI SOMJIBHAI DAMOR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of regular posts of doctors lying vacant alongwith the doctors working on contract basis in Western Railway;

(b) whether the Government are aware that the doctors appointed on regular basis in Railways are being harassed and forced to quit jobs;

(c) if so, the facts in this regard; and

(d) the measures being taken by the Government to prevent the exodus of doctors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) :

(a) Vacancies - 60

No. of contract doctors - 47

(b) No Sir. No such incident has come to notice.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Does not arise.

Amount Provided in Budget

4096. SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the amount provided in the current year's Budget (zone-wise);

(b) whether the amount provided in the Budget 1996-97 for North East Frontier Railway sector is the minimum in comparison to other Railway zones;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the criteria being adopted and basis on which the Budgetary provisions are made while preparing the Budget; and

(e) the estimated amount in the Budget of Railways for 1997-98 zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) A statement is attached.

(b) No Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The Budgetary provisions to the zonal Railways are made keeping in view the number of works in progress, their priority and proposed new works.

(e) The Annual Plan for 1997-98 is yet to be finalised.

STATEMENT

(a) The Net outlays provided to different zonal Railway during 1996-97 is as follows :

(In thousands of rupees)

Railway	Plan Outlay
Central	481.02.49
Eastern	285.04.00
Northern	473.13.33
North Eastern	186.85.22
Northest Frontier	256.58.93
Southern	461.41.39
South Central	305.50.05
South Eastern	505.16.37
Western	388.78.61

[Translation]

Conversion of Rail Lines

4097. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a proposal for conversion of Kathgodam-Bareilly-Mathura-Agra and Bareilly-Pilibhit rail lines; and

(b) if so, the time by which the said conversion work is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In the IXth Plan.

[English]

ESI Hospital in Punjab

4098. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of ESI dispensaries functioning in Punjab district-wise;

(b) the number of persons benefited therefrom;

(c) the details of the schemes formulated to upgrade and modernise these despensaries;

(d) whether the Government propose to set up more ESI dispensaries in Punjab; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) and (b). The requisite information about number of ESI dispensaries in Punjab is given in the Statement attached. There are 14,77,300 beneficiaries eligible for ESI medical care from these dispensaries.

(c) to (e). The responsibility for administration of medical care under the ESI Act in the State vests in the Government of Punjab. The ESI Corporation has fixed norms for staffing of dispensaries, provision of equipments, medicines etc. The Corporation meets 7/8th of the expenditure incurred on running of ESI medicals care in the State. Upgradation and modernisation of dispensaries, according to felt needs, is a continuous process. There is at present no proposal to open more ESI dispenaries in Punjab.

STATEMENT

District-wise Number of Dispensaries in Punjab

District	No. of Dispensaries
1	2
Ludhiana	13
Ropar	3